

HARTFORD STREET ZEN CENTER "NEWS"

57 Hartford Street -- Phone: 863-2507 -- Email: hszc108@yahoo.com -- Website: www.hszc.org -- Feb., 2007



Roger Corless (1938-2007)

A friend and beloved teacher, author and scholar, Roger Corless, Professor Emeritus of Religion (Duke University) died on January 12th after a long illness. Roger published many books and articles on Buddhism, Christianity, Buddhist-Christian Dialogue and Gay Studies, especially in relation to Buddhist practice in the LGBT community. He was a co-founder of the Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies and a member of the Gay Buddhist Fellowship.

MORNING (Monday-Friday)

5:30am-6:10 Zazen - Sitting Meditation
6:10am-6:20 Kinhin - Walking Meditation
6:20am-7:00 Zazen
7:00am-7:20 Chanting (Service)
7:20am-7:35 Soji - Temple Cleaning

EVENING (Monday-Friday)

6:00pm-6:40 Zazen
6:40pm-6:50 Chanting

SATURDAY MORNING

6:30am-7:15 Zazen
7:15am-7:35 Chanting
7:35am-7:55 Soji

[BREAK]

9:10am-9:50 Zazen
10:00am-11:00 Dharma Talk followed by tea and cookies and discussion.

SUNDAYS and HOLIDAYS - Closed

FEBRUARY DATES TO REMEMBER

FEB 2 Full Moon Ceremony
FEB 9 Bodhidharma Celebration
FEB 15 Parinirvana Ceremony

Special Thank You to Gary Weiss (IXIA Flowers)

Reprinted from 1989 Newsletter and **STILL TRUE**

Gary Weiss, a founding member of Hartford Street, has generously provided the elegant and sophisticated flower arrangements that grace the main altar in the zendo every other week, since he opened IXIA at 2331 Market Street in 1983. Gary remarked then that he helped take care of Suzuki-roshi's bonsai trees while living at Green Gulch and that was a big help in learning flower design. But that sitting had the most profound effect. "Zazen," he said, "has contributed to every arrangement that has been made at my shop." With deep gratitude and bows to Gary for 25 years of generosity and service!

* THANK YOU's and WELCOME's *

Thank you to all of our members who so generously responded to our Year-End Appeal ... and to Rev. Rin McCarthy for her recent Dharma talk. A warm welcome to our new members: Janos Zanyi, Brian Klein and John Santibanes. And a special welcome to returning resident, Justin Rosetta and new residents, Chris Arsenault and Scott Starr.

DISCOVER ZEN CULTURE IN THE CASTRO!

The Hartford Street Zen Center announces a year-long series of special cultural events in celebration of our 25th anniversary of service to the community.

The series begins on Saturday, February 10 with a talk and demonstration of Japanese calligraphy by Gengetsu Jana Drakka, from 2pm - 4pm at 57 Hartford Street. She will talk about the history of calligraphy in Zen Buddhism, then will demonstrate and allow attendees to try their hand.

What does it mean to live an authentic life - to find your perfection through your "imperfections"? Jana will use a calligraphy demonstration and talk to convey this message. An Arabian stallion tethered to a straw hut is an image often used to illustrate the aesthetic of Wabi Sabi - the beauty bestowed by time, the simple comfort of an old tea cup, the appreciation of the patina of an ancestor - we'll explore the liberation possible through seeing your art and your life through these eyes. There will also be a few calligraphy pieces for sale.

Gengetsu Jana Drakka is a priest and practice leader at the SF Zen Center. She teaches meditation at Homeless Drop-In Centers and SRO Hotels throughout San Francisco. She was recently featured on the front page of the Chronicle in an article about Jana's compassionate work with the Homeless community. Jana has been practicing calligraphy for 13 years.

The series will continue throughout 2007 and present a different event each month that showcases the cultural milieu of Zen Buddhism. Upcoming presentations in the series include: flower arranging for home altars, cooking demonstrations, tea ceremony, incense samplings, and other stimulating topics.

Did you notice?? We now have 2 heaters going in the zendo as it's been so cold.

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Disinterested Pursuit of Pleasure by Rev. Darlene Cohen

*First published, Fall 1997 HSZC Newsletter
from her Dharma talk on 3/18/97.*

I give "Suffering and Delight" workshops for people who have a lot of pain or stress in their lives. Of course that is everyone! I don't promote pleasure as a distraction from pain, but we may notice that if we observe our suffering closely, we can detect little tendrils of pleasure interpenetrating the pain. Sometimes it's a big deal to notice any pleasure at all in a very difficult situation.

In our enormously puritanical culture, we are not supposed to have sensual pleasure. Our body's sensual urges and qualities are considered dangerous. A couple of years ago, we collectively demanded the firing of a Surgeon General who wouldn't condemn masturbation. The Pope also came out against meditation and yoga, specifically because they are body-based. When we start sitting zazen, we are usually so judgmental towards our thoughts that we become very discouraged in our practice. I think we need permission to be kind to ourselves and to have fun, so I'd like to talk about the disinterested pursuit of pleasure as a very important aspect of our practice discipline.

First we should consider the relationship between pleasure and pain. They're like a lot of pairs—life and death, love and hate, sickness and health—if you pluck one out of the indiscriminate void, the other always follows. They don't have meaning except in relation to each other. They come from the same source: our human tendency to avoid pain and grasp pleasure. The real difference between pleasure and pain is the emotion they elicit—we are repelled by pain and attracted to pleasure.

The solution is just to live your life and be alive for all the details - good, bad, or neutral. Not to pick out the moments you decide are worth being alive for and be numb for all the rest. This is dropping body and mind, to actually live each moment of your life. This is taking care of your body, flowing in and out of its intelligence. This is something we have to learn to do because our culture encourages us to pay so much attention to our thoughts and ideas. We

have to learn to tune into our bodies often to start feeling at home there.

Any practice you use to develop the skill of paying attention, like meditation, teaches you to get in touch with things are, as they rather

*It is not you against sickness,
pain, anger, or anything else.*

than clumping things together into aggregates like pain and pleasure. If you take pain apart, it is not one thing; some times it is aching or burning or sadness or anger. You have to observe your suffering closely in order to experience what it is, moment after moment, and this is a skill to be acquired. When you do things this way you just take care of what needs to be taken care of. It is not you against sickness, pain, anger, or anything else. This is a practice of not preferring a state of mind, of not saying, "I am going to be alive for this state of mind but not for that one."

If you notice your cycle of craving and aversion and regard it with some humor and detachment, then you can begin practicing the disinterested pursuit of pleasure. And why pursue pleasure? Research shows that pleasure is biochemically superior to pain and strengthens your immune system. Especially certain kinds of pleasures, like ecstasy, which involve the loss of your discriminating mind. Even when you come back to your old oppressive critical mind after some time in ecstasy, you are refreshed. Another significant kind of pleasure is the feeling of empowerment that comes from committing to whatever your life offers, not holding anything back and always giving everything full attention.

Perhaps the most important reason why a Buddhist practitioner would pursue pleasure is that when you feel bounteous, filled with pleasure, you are compelled to share your wealth! (Darlene and her husband Tony Patchell are head priests at the Russian River Zendo (picture art with article is from their website) in Guerneville. They offer numerous classes and workshops. See www.darlenecohen.net.)

*Please join us for our Movie Night...
on Sunday Feb. 18th at 5pm, showing:*

- Seabiscuit -

**Sign our register to get email announcements.*

